

REMARKS

Response to Restriction Requirement

The Examiner has required the applicant to elect, pursuant to 35 U.S.C. § 121, one invention from among the claims as-filed and suggests that the applicant select from among the different inventions as claimed either in Claims **1 – 10, 24, & 25** (Group I), Claims **11-14 & 26-27** (Group II), Claims **15-16** (Group III), Claim **17** (Group IV), Claims **18-20** (Group V), and Claim **21** (Group VI).

In response to this requirement, applicant provisionally elects with traverse the invention claimed in Group IV (Claim **17**) and further requests that the Examiner consider Claim **22** in conjunction with the examination of the elected group.

By way of explanation, applicant would note Claims **22** and **23** were not included in any of the inventive groups defined previously by the Examiner. Thus, applicant requests that at least Claim **22**, which depends directly from Claim **17**, be associated with Group IV and examined therewith. Additionally, new Claims **35** and **36** cover a subject matter similar to that claimed in Claim **22** and it is requested that these new claims be examined in connection with the examination of Claim **28** from which they depend.

Amendments to the Claims

Applicant has amended Claim **17** to set out more clearly the invention which is claimed in the application as-filed. More particularly, various typographical errors and clarifications have been added. Claim **22** has been similarly amended to clarify and correct it.

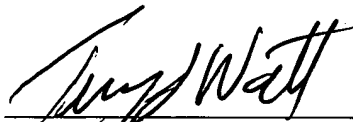
New Claims

Claims 28 through 36 have been added to better define the invention as-taught by the instant inventors. Each of these claims is drawn to the elected Group IV except, as has been described previously, for Claims 35 and 36 which parallel the subject matter of Claim 22. The subject matter claimed within these claims is fully disclosed in the specification as-filed and, as such, does not constitute new matter.

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In view of the foregoing, the applicant believes that the claims as-filed are in condition for allowance and should be passed to the issue branch. Early and favorable action is earnestly solicited.

Respectfully submitted,



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11/11/02
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APPENDIX A:

Amended Version of Claims With Markings to Show Changes Made

ALL PENDING CLAIMS

1. *Cancelled.*
2. *Cancelled.*
3. *Cancelled.*
4. *Cancelled.*
5. *Cancelled.*
6. *Cancelled.*
7. *Cancelled.*
8. *Cancelled.*
9. *Cancelled.*
10. *Cancelled.*
11. *Cancelled.*
12. *Cancelled.*
13. *Cancelled.*
14. *Cancelled.*
15. *Cancelled.*
16. *Cancelled.*
17. (Once amended) A remote unitary module for controlling access to a plurality of video channels that are distributed over a communications conduit,

wherein the communications conduit has a head-end and at least one remote-end,

said remote unitary module being positioned along a remote-end of the
communications conduit, and

said remote unitary module being provided with a changeable list of
permitted video channel numbers,

said remote unitary module, comprising:

- (a) a first tuner in electronic communication with said communications conduit, said first tuner receiving a particular video channel as input and providing a baseband video signal as output, said particular video channel being associated with a particular video channel number;
- (b) means for changing said first tuner to receive a different video channel, said different video channel having a different video channel number;
- (c) a CPU in electronic communications with said first tuner, said CPU sensing said different video channel number and determining whether said different video channel number is in said changeable list of permitted video channel numbers;
- (d) computer RAM [connected to] in electronic communication with said CPU, said RAM containing
 - at least one digital image[,] stored therein; and,
- (e) a video switch having at least a first video input, a second video input, and a video output,
wherein
 - (e1) said first video input receives said baseband video signal from said first tuner,

(e2) said second video input receives a baseband video representation of said digital image stored in said computer RAM, and,

(e3) said video output is switchable under control of said CPU between said baseband video signal from said first tuner and said baseband video representation of said digital image.

18. *Cancelled.*

19. *Cancelled.*

20. *Cancelled.*

21. *Cancelled.*

22. *(Once amended)* A method of controlling access to a plurality of video channels that are distributed over a communications conduit, each of said video channels being associated with a video channel number, wherein is provided the [apparatus] remote unitary module of Claim 17, and,

wherein the communications conduit has a head-end and at least one remote-end, wherein there is provided a plurality of said remote unitary modules positioned along a remote-end of said communications conduit, and,

wherein each of said plurality of remote unitary modules [having] has a changeable list of permitted video channel numbers associated therewith,
[and,]

comprising the steps of:

(a) assigning an individual security key code to each of said plurality of remote unitary modules;

- (b) identifying at least one of said plurality of remote unitary module that is to receive a changed list of permitted video channel numbers and identifying [the] an individual security key code assigned [thereto] to each of said identified remote unitary modules;
- (c) obtaining a video image from a digital or an analog source, said video image having a plurality of scan lines contained therein;
- (d) obtaining a predetermined scan line of said [digital] video image;
- [(d)e] for each identified remote unitary module, impressing a value representative of its [said] assigned identified individual security key code into said predetermined scan line, thereby creating a modified [digital] video image;
- [(e)f] impressing values representative of said changed list of permitted video channel numbers into a second predetermined scan line, thereby creating a further modified [digital] video image;
- [(f)] creating a video representation of said further modified digital image;
- (g) broadcasting said further modified video [representation of said further modified digital] image over said communications conduit;
- (h) receiving said broadcast video [representation] image within at least one of said at least one remote unitary modules;
- (i) within at least one of said at least one remote unitary modules wherein said broadcast video image is received,
 - (i1) determining a local security key code for said remote unitary module wherein said broadcast video image is received,

- (i[1]2) identifying said predetermined scan line,
- (i[2]3) extracting [said identified individual security key code] from said
predetermined scan line any values representative of said assigned
individual security keys impressed therein, [thereby forming an extracted
key,]
- (i4) determining from any values extracted from said predetermined scan line
at least one transmitted individual security key,
- (i[3]5) comparing each of said at least one transmitted [extracted] security keys
with [the] said [assigned] local individual security key [for this remote
unitary module],
- (i[4]6) if said [assigned] local individual security key [for this remote unitary
module] is equal to [said] any one of said at least one transmitted
[extracted] keys, storing within said selected remote unitary module a
numerical representation of said changed list of permitted video channel
numbers, and,
- (i7) performing steps (i1) through (i6) for at least one selected remote unitary
module;
- (j) monitoring said first tuner to detect whether the user has selected a [said] different
video channel number;
- (k) determining whether said selected different video channel number is among said
changed list of permitted video channel numbers;

- (l) if said different video channel number is not among said changed list of permitted video channel numbers, displaying to the user an alternative video image for said different video channel; and,
- (m) if said different channel number is among said changed list of permitted video channel numbers, displaying to the user said different video channel.

23. *Cancelled.*

24. *Cancelled.*

25. *Cancelled.*

26. *Cancelled.*

27. *Cancelled.*

28. (New) A method of controlling access to a plurality of video channels that are distributed over a communications conduit according to Claim 22, wherein said predetermined scan line is a first scan line of said video image.

29. (New) A method of controlling access to a plurality of video channels that are distributed over a communications conduit according to Claim 22, wherein said predetermined scan line is a non-visible scan line of said video image.

30. (New) A remote unitary module for controlling access by a user to a plurality of video channels that are distributed over a communications conduit, wherein said remote unitary module is provided with a changeable list of permitted video channel numbers, each of

said permitted channel numbers being associated with one of said plurality of video channels,

said remote unitary module comprising:

- (a) a first video tuner in electronic communication with said communications conduit, said first tuner being configurable to accept at least two of said plurality of video channels as input, wherein,
 - (a1) said first video tuner is switchable to receive a selected one of said at least two video channels, said selected video channel having a corresponding selected video channel number,
 - (a2) said first video tuner transmits a first tuner video signal as output, said first tuner video signal being representative of said selected video channel;
- (b) a CPU in electronic communication with said first video tuner, said CPU responding according to said selected video channel to determine whether said selected video channel number is in said changeable list of permitted video channel numbers;
- (c) computer RAM in electronic communication with said CPU, said RAM containing at least one digital image stored therein;
- (d) a video controller in electronic communication with said CPU and said RAM, said video controller having a video controller output for transmitting a controller video signal representative of at least one of said at least one digital images stored in said RAM;

- (e) a video switch having at least a first video switch input, a second switch video input, and a video switch output,
wherein
 - (e1) said first video switch input receives said first tuner video signal from said first video tuner,
 - (e2) said second video switch input receives said controller video signal from said video controller output,
 - (e3) said video switch output is switchable under control of said CPU between said first tuner video signal and said controller video signal, depending on whether said selected video channel is a permitted video channel.
- 31. (New) A remote unitary module for controlling access by a user to a plurality of video channels according to Claim 30, wherein said first video tuner is switchable by the user to receive a selected one of said at least two video channels.
- 32. (New) A remote unitary module for controlling access by a user to a plurality of video channels according to Claim 30, wherein said computer RAM contains a plurality of digital images stored therein, and wherein said video controller successively displays selected ones of said plurality of digital images under control of said CPU.

33. (New) A remote unitary module for controlling access by a user to a plurality of video channels according to Claim 30, wherein said first tuner video signal is a baseband signal and said controller video signal is a baseband signal.
34. (New) A remote unitary module for controlling access by a user to a plurality of video channels according to Claim 30, wherein said controller video signal is generated at a same frequency as said output from said first video tuner.
35. (New) A remote unitary module for controlling access by a user to a plurality of video channels according to Claim 30, further comprising:
- (f) a video display device positionable to be in electronic communication with said video switch output, said video display device for displaying in visually perceptible form a video signal from said output of said video switch.
36. (New) A remote unitary module for controlling access by a user to a plurality of video channels according to Claim 30, further comprising:
- (f) a video modulator in electronic communication with said video switch output, said video modulator modulating a video signal from said output of said video switch to a predetermined video channel.
37. (New) A method of controlling access to a plurality of video channels that are broadcast over a communications conduit, each of said video channels being associated with a

video channel number, and wherein is provided at least one remote unitary module as in Claim 30 which is in electronic communication with said communications conduit and with said plurality of video channels, each of said at least one remote unitary modules having a security code associated therewith, comprising the steps of:

- (a) identifying at least one of said at least one remote unitary module that is to receive a changed list of permitted video channel numbers
- (b) identifying a particular security key code assigned to each of said identified remote unitary modules;
- (c) obtaining a video image from a digital or an analog source, said video image having a plurality of scan lines contained therein;
- (d) selecting a first scan line of said video image;
- (e) storing a value representative of each of said identified particular security key codes into said first scan line, thereby creating a modified video image;
- (f) selecting a second scan line of said video image;
- (g) storing values representative of said changed list of permitted video channel numbers into said second predetermined scan line, thereby creating a further modified video image;
- (h) broadcasting said further modified video image over said communications conduit;
- (i) receiving said broadcast video image within a particular remote unitary module, said particular remote unitary module having a particular security key associated therewith;

- (j) within said particular remote unitary module,
 - (j1) extracting from said first scan line at least one of said values representative of said assigned individual security keys stored therein,
 - (j2) determining from any of said extracted values representative of said assigned individual security keys at least one of said identified security keys,
 - (j3) comparing any of said determined identified security keys with said particular security key of said particular remote unitary module,
 - (j4) if said particular security key matches any of said determined identified security keys, storing within said particular remote unitary module a numerical representation of said changed list of permitted video channel numbers,
 - (j5) monitoring said first tuner within said particular remote unitary module to detect when the user has selected a video channel number,
 - (j6) determining whether said selected video channel number is among said changed list of permitted video channel numbers,
 - (j7) if said selected video channel number is among said changed list of permitted video channel numbers, displaying to the user said selected video channel, and,
 - (j8) if said selected video channel number is not among said changed list of permitted video channel numbers, displaying to the user an alternative video image.

38. (New) A method according to Claim 37, wherein said first scan line and said second scan line are a same scan line.
39. (New) A method according to Claim 37, wherein said first scan line and said second scan line are both non-visible scan lines.